

October 13, 1999

Dear Wildlife Services Customers and Cooperators:

Since the transfer of our program from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in 1986, the need for effective, socially acceptable, and environmentally safe wildlife damage management has risen dramatically. Increasing suburban development, adaptable and overabundant wildlife populations, and a shift in public attitudes have all been important factors in contributing to this rise. During the 1990's, the WS program has been involved in a number of efforts designed to ensure that the Federal assistance we provide to deal with wildlife conflicts will continue to be available well into the next century. One significant effort we have taken very seriously is our effort to alleviate any potential computer problems that might occur on or around January 1, 2000, commonly referred to as the Y2K problem.

Initially, most people thought the Year 2000 problem affected only computers. Now we know that virtually anything with an embedded microchip that is not Y2K compliant could fail, including equipment and systems such as building security systems, office equipment, and vehicles.

The purpose of this letter is to chronicle the considerable progress WS has achieved to ensure continuous service. Below, we have provided an update regarding the steps we have taken to address Y2K concerns.

Progress that Wildlife Services has made in assuring Y2K compliance:

- Developed and tested Year 2000 contingency plans for each WS office to assure continuity in our critical business processes.
- Educated managers and employees on the problems associated with the year 2000 transition.
- Inventoried and audited: buildings and facilities, office and laboratory equipment, vehicles, aircraft, communication equipment, and computer systems and applications.
- Requested Y2K compliance certification from our suppliers and vendors.
- Replaced or upgraded all computers that were not Y2K compatible.
- Certified our Management Information System (a critical reporting system in WS) as Y2K compliant.
- Initiated outreach efforts to assure our cooperators and customers that WS is Y2K compliant.

Though confident there will be no interruption in our interactions or delivery of services, WS commits to quickly address any problems should they arise. We would also appreciate hearing your concerns on any areas that we may have overlooked. If you have a Y2K related question, please contact Mr. William Cosgrove, APHIS Y2K Coordinator. He can be reached at Area Code (301) 734-5200, or you may e-mail him at William.Cosgrove@usda.gov

Finally, we hope you also take this time to analyze your own systems and facilities to ensure Y2K compatibility. APHIS encourages you to visit the USDA Web site (<http://www.usda.gov>) and select the Y2K icon for detailed information about this critical issue.

Sincerely,

/s/ William H. Clay

William H. Clay
Acting Deputy Administrator
Wildlife Services